

Background and History of the Division of Continuing Education

Although the Division of Continuing Education of the Ohio State University is, in its present form, a creature of only about the last decade, its roots run far back into the history and tradition of the university as a land-grant institution. Recognizing teaching, research and service as the traditional functions of an institution of higher education and with professed emphasis on service in an institution of the land-grant variety, continuing education in theory and practice should be an on going and important part of the university. To be sure, the expression of the concept of continuing education or service may take many forms, and this appears to be and has been the case at Ohio State.

Perhaps the earliest recorded expression of this concept as it has manifested itself in terms of the university's extension of itself was in April of 1907. In this year the university offered a "short course in agriculture" designed to meet the needs of young

farmers who had not enjoyed the opportunity for education in agriculture. (1) While this fact may more properly be viewed as an aspect of the history of the College of Agriculture, its relevance to an examination of the historical backgrounds of extension at Ohio State University in general and to the idea of continuing education in particular is that the course was offered prior to the creation of the Cooperative Extension Service. Further, it was apparently offered in the spirit and intent to which the Division of Continuing Education speaks now: continuing education for personal and professional reasons, for persons who have not previously had the opportunity for higher education or whose educational careers have been interrupted.

Around 1913, the state legislature authorized the Board of Trustees to establish and organize a University Extension Division for the purpose of "carrying on educational extension and correspondence instruction throughout the state". (2) Further, authority was granted

to "carry on such extension work in connection with any department of the university for the purpose of the development throughout the state of centers for discussion, consideration and investigation relative to the mining, manufacturing, engineering, social, individual, economic, medical and civic interests of the state and all other public interests which may be in anyway promoted to serve in the spreading of information throughout the state by any department then existing or later created". (3) Through this division, the trustees directed the university to encourage communities to organize for "the purpose of social, educational, scientific, and recreational advantage" and to "cooperate with them and in every way contribute to the efficiency of such communities for these purposes". This extension division was to be placed at the service of the educational, industrial, or civic institutions, organizations and associations and invite their entire cooperation in matters relating to the civic, scientific, economic and social welfare

of the citizens of the state. (4)

Further evidence of the expression of the concept of continuing education is evident from the existence of two small brochures describing courses for adults. The first, entitled "The University Extension Program for Adults", details courses in business, economics and sociology. These courses were offered by the Ohio State University Department of Commerce Extension in 1929 and 1930. (5)

The rationale for these programs is presented in terms of the importance of adult education, its rapid development, and the widespread demand in the state for university concern and involvement in the service dimension of its role. (6) A second publication is titled

"University Courses in Accounting, Economics, Finance, Marketing Problems, Money and Banking, Salesmanship, and Management".

It is part of The Ohio State University Bulletin, volume 39, No. 1,

July, 1934. (7) The significance of these two documents is that the

continuing education function was being recognized and while not the responsibility of a central unit, was being acted on. As we shall see as we progress, this concept of individual colleges responding to continuing educational needs in its particular area of expertise is still being followed with certain practical and logical differences.

Between 1939 and 1940, while credit courses similar to those offered by the Department of Commerce Extension continued to be offered, the Adult Evening School was established and administered by the Bureau of Special and Adult Education. It developed partially in response to increased educational interest brought on by the War as well as out of concern for extending the offerings of the college to persons who could not attend the regular daytime classes.(8) While available documents are not wholly clear on the matter, it appears that while the offerings of the Adult Evening School were non-credit in nature, credit offerings continued in the same manner as the offerings

of the Department of Commerce Extension. One source indicates that these offerings were part of what we will soon discuss as Twilight School.(9) The Adult Evening School offered some sixty to eighty courses on a non-credit basis each quarter, and enrollment ranged from 1400 to 1800 students. Courses were typically of a recreational and entertainment nature along with some lower division courses.(10) It is interesting to note that in the midst of the War the first Japanese course ever taught on the campus was offered in the Adult Evening School.(11)

As mentioned above, there is little certainty about when the Twilight School began and the Adult Evening School terminated its activities. Various sources indicate that the Adult Evening School gave way to the Twilight School or that the two were in operation simultaneously and that the activities of the Adult Evening School were taken over by the Twilight School. In any case, in July of 1942 the

Board of Trustees took action to provide the opportunity for persons employed full-time to take evening courses. While the university had scheduled evening courses before, the board's action was the first recognition of the special needs of persons employed full-time. In the Fall of the same year, the Twilight School Committee was organized and included Dr. Kibler as chairman, Dr. Avery, and Harold K. Schellenger as secretary. The offerings of the Twilight School program consisted of about 90 courses distributed mainly among the Colleges of Commerce and Administration, Education, and Arts and Sciences. (12)

In 1944, when Twilight School was given formal status(13), Dr. Norval Luxon was appointed director of the Twilight School and an advisory council of six members was formed. Under Dr. Luxon's direction, the Twilight School appears to have enjoyed a period of growth and popularity. Part of this growth saw the establishment

of the Wright-Patterson Field Graduate Center at Dayton which was administered through the Twilight School. In addition, Workshops in Social Administration and Education also became the responsibility of the Twilight School. Following Luxon's expansion and popularization of the Twilight School, Mr. L. K. Cooperrider was appointed director, and the Twilight School continued to serve the community.

In 1949, President Bevis appointed a committee to study adult education, extension courses, general education, the advisability of establishing a junior college and in general, the whole concept being spoken to by the Twilight School. The committee's recommendations are of interest:

1. The Twilight School should be continued.
2. There should not be the availability of a complete four year offering, but rather, place emphasis on first year requirements.
3. The program should operate during the three regular quarters and in the Summer if the demand was great enough.

4. There should be no separate instructional staff.
5. The Director should be directly responsible to the President.
6. There should be a Twilight School Council.
7. Courses should be taught by regular staff members, to be assigned to teaching responsibility by their respective departments.
8. Courses should be college level and should carry full college credit.
9. The registration procedure should be simplified. (14)

An examination of statements of rationale for the present Division of Continuing Education relates closely to many of the recommendations above.

As the concept of continuing education was carried into the fifties under the Twilight School, it served increasing numbers of people. Its objectives were as follows:

1. To provide the opportunity for employed persons to add to their education and thereby increase their value on the job.
2. To provide opportunity for adults to add to their education on general, cultural lines.
3. To provide the opportunity for persons seeking degrees to make progress toward that objective.

Admission to the Twilight School was open to any graduate of a first

class high school and to certain non-graduates of mature years.

Students were admitted to Twilight School as Special Students unless they wished to submit high school records or college transcripts, in which case they could possibly become degree candidates in one of the regular undergraduate colleges.

Clearly, policies like these made continuing education a real possibility for many people, but problems began to arise because of an apparent lack of supervision of Twilight School students, little or no concern with the maintenance of the university's minimum academic standards, and so on, and as a result, faculty and administration became somewhat negative in their attitude toward what the Twilight School was doing.

Growing out of this discontent, Vice President Heimberger, Vice President for Instruction and Research, wrote a letter to President Fawcett concerning the development and management

of continuing education.

Somewhat earlier, activity within individual colleges had been stepped up in the area of non-credit continuing education programs.

These included short courses, workshops, seminars, and so on.

In light of the continuing and increased activity in the area of evening credit programming and continuing education non-credit programs, Dr. Heimberger recommended the creation of a new position, Coordinator of Part-Time Education, whose responsibilities would include working with Deans and Department Chairmen in the planning of evening courses, to keep in touch with the metropolitan communities needs and interests, to develop appropriate registration procedures for these activities, to publicize offerings and procedures, and to a limited degree and at the discretion of the dean concerned, serve as a staff member of each college offering evening courses. (15) To this end, Dr. G. Robert Holsinger was appointed as

Coordinator and in 1961 he was given the title of Dean of the newly created Division of Part-Time and Continuing Education.

Beginning in 1958-59, and until 1961 and 1962, the major thrust of the activity of the Division was in the area of credit programming and clarifying and stabilizing the role of the Twilight School's activities. As non-credit conference and workshop activities had been increasing, and as the result of a 1955 study of practices in this area, in June, 1961, an Interim Conference Facilities Coordinator was appointed. This step was taken to centralize the arrangements for conferences, short courses and workshops. (16)

Upon creation in 1961, the Office of Part-Time and Continuing Education was responsible for the part-time education program (evening program), non-credit programs, public relations for continuing education and adult education, development of special projects directly concerned with adult education and for liaison with national

organizations devoted to research in the area of adult education.

In the Spring of the 1964-65 academic year, recommendations from the Office of Part-Time and Continuing Education were presented to the Council on Admissions and Registration recommending that responsibility for the coordination of the administration and development of all university continuing education programs, credit and non-credit, be given to the Division. It was pointed out that the Division had had no administrative authority in the past as students had to register through one of the regular undergraduate colleges. As a result, there was little or no counseling for adults, there were irregularities in reinstatement and dismissal requirements, and there was little or nothing in the way of positive public relations. (17)

Recognizing these as valid problems, the Division was given responsibility for the admission and registration of adult students,

and dropping the "part-time" from its name, became the Division of Continuing Education. With this action, students 21 years of age or over could be admitted to the Division as "Adult Special" students to pursue courses for personal or professional reasons but whose programs are not degree oriented. In addition, the Division was given the responsibility for Transient or visiting students.

In 1966, Dr. Holsinger was appointed Assistant to the President and Continuing Education was temporarily without a leader. In October, 196⁶, Dr. Robert W. McCormick was ^{named} ~~made~~ "Assistant Vice President for Continuing Education". Also in 1967 the central office of the State Technical and Business Services program was transferred to the Division of Continuing Education from the College of Engineering.

Now under construction on the West bank of the Olentangy River,

the Center for Tomorrow originated in 1959 or 1960 as "a personal dream of President Fawcett".(18) The Center will serve four main functions: telecommunications, alumni programs, national security, and continuing education.

Commenting in the Ohio State Lantern of May 13, 1968, G.

Robert Holsinger, then executive assistant to President Fawcett, said of continuing education:

As a philosophy, it sees the campus as a community of scholars making itself as useful as possible to all citizens of the state. As a function, continuing education seeks to identify the problems and needs of the public, to interpret those needs in terms of university resources, and to translate needs and resources into educational programs. As a method, continuing education encompasses specialized rest-

dential instruction, evening classes, conferences,

short courses, seminars, lecture series, and

instruction by radio and television.... a wide

range of instructional tools for individuals, organ-

izations and committees.

Scheduled for completion and dedication during the Centennial year,

the Center will serve to draw the university and the people of Ohio

closer together. It will give visibility to the concept of continuing

education and will serve to focus the many and varied activities of

the Division of Continuing Education.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Pollard, James E., History of the Ohio State University, The Story of Its 1st 70 Years, The Ohio State University Press, (Columbus, 1952), p. 194.
- (2) The University Extension Program for Adults, 1929-30.
- (3) Ibid., p.p. 3-7.
- (4) The Ohio State University Bulletin, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, July 30, 1934.
- (5) History of The Ohio State University - 1910 - 1925, Thomas C. Mendenhal (ed.), p. 20.
- (6) Ibid., p. 20.
- (7) Ibid., p. 20.
- (8) Pollard, James E., History of the Ohio State University, Vol. VII, "The Bevis Administration, 1940-1956", The Ohio State University, (Columbus, 1967), p. 50.
- (9) Ibid., p. 49.
- (10) "Recommendations to the Faculty Council on Adult and Extension Education", Faculty Council Minutes, Ohio State University, April, 1950.
- (11) Op. Cit., Pollard, p. 44.
- (12) Twilight School Problems, Report of The Chairman of The Twilight School Committee (May, 1943).
- (13) Op. Cit., Pollard, p. 118.
- (14) Ibid., p.p. 135-136.
- (15) Heimberger Letter, July 2, 1959 (Archives Box AA 13-8-3)
- (16) Barton, John C., A Statement of the Current Status of The Office of the Director of University Conferences in the Division of Continuing Education at the Ohio State University.

FOOTNOTES (CONTINUED)

- (17) Faculty Council Minutes, Ohio State University, 1964-65, p. 327.**
- (18) Ohio State Lantern, May 13, 1968, p. 4a.**